

# 10 die as suspected Fulani herdsmen invade Benue community

From **Simeon Nwakaodu**, Makurdi

**ABOUT 10** persons have been reported dead after armed Fulani herdsmen invaded Tyotegh council ward in Gwer-West Local Council of Benue State to carry out reprisal attacks in retaliation of their

cattle allegedly killed by indigenes of the area.

The rampaging herdsmen, who rode on horses and motorcycles, were said to have arrived in Tyotegh Village on Monday night shooting at residents and torching their

homes.

The herdsmen allegedly torched more than 25 homes and displaced over 3,000 persons in the community.

The Guardian learnt that some villagers had killed the cattle of some herdsmen after the own-

ers led them into the indigenes' farmlands. The herdsmen fled the community last week only to mobilise for the mass attack.

The conflict has spread to Mbakyondo Village in Makurdi, where the suspected

Fulani herdsmen also invaded the community and killed two farmers in the process.

Hundreds of residents of Mbakyondo have fled to Adeke Village, five kilometres from Makurdi town for refuge.

Commenting on the crisis, Security Adviser to the Benue State Governor, Col. Basil Kwembe, confirmed the killings and burning of homes of the Tiv farmers.

He appealed to the victims of the invasion to remain calm, saying that the state government had mobilised the police to provide security in the affected areas.

Kwembe said the state government would compensate all the victims.

Chairman of Gwer-West Local Council, Andrew Ayande, said the council would alleviate the suffering of the victims.

When contacted, the state

Police Commissioner, Ibrahim Mohammed, said he could confirm five deaths so far, but added that the casualty figure could be higher. He added that a detachment of mobile policemen had been deployed in the area.

Meanwhile, a mobile policeman at Kanshio suburb of Makurdi on Wednesday killed one Aondowase Anngu after a disagreement.

The policeman was allegedly trespassing on the home of Anngu and was stopped by the deceased. He left the scene only to return wearing his uniform and armed with a pistol, which he allegedly used in killing Anngu.

At the time of filing this report, hundreds of youths have started protesting the killing.

Mohammed said he was yet to get the details of the police killing and promised to make public his findings soon.

## SSS to arraign Ameachi's aide, family alleges denial of access

From **Kolvin Ebiri**, Port Harcourt

**MEMBERS** of the family of detained Special Assistant to the Rivers State Governor on Students Affairs, Dike Princewill, have accused the State Security Services (SSS) of denying them access to the embattled aide.

Princewill was arrested by SSS operatives two weeks ago for allegedly sending death threats through short message services (SMS) to Governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State.

The agency's Assistant Director of Operations and Intelligence, Mr. Kunle Ajanaku, told *The Guardian* on Tuesday that investigations had almost been concluded into the matter, adding that it would soon be assigned to the state Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for necessary legal advice, after which, Princewill would be arraigned in court.

But the detainee's brother, Zuby Dike, told *The Guardian*

that the SSS had denied the family access to Princewill since he was arrested two weeks ago.

Princewill, who was arrested two weeks ago by the SSS following complains by Amaechi that he had been receiving death threats on his mobile phone, was said to be cooperating with the investigators.

The SSS said Princewill was arrested for allegedly sending SMS to the governor where he threatened to kill him if he failed to implement the 2009 Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) agreement, which led to the four-month industrial action by teachers at the state's tertiary institutions of learning.

Dike said the family until last Tuesday had not contacted any lawyer as they were trying to explore amicable resolution of the matter.

He added that the governor might not been keen on hav-

ing his brother prosecuted due to their long-standing relationship.

Last week, the SSS disclosed that shortly after the Rivers State University of Science and technology (RSUST)-ASUU embarked on strike last October, Amaechi, who had threatened a one million-man match against the striking teachers, started receiving death threats from the mobile phones of two female students of the University of Port Harcourt

(UNIPORT).

The SSS said the governor had at the inception ignored the death threats, but changed his stance when it became persistent. The agency said it was able to track down the owners of the phones purportedly used by Princewill, through the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) numbers of the phones where the SMS emanated from.

## Why govt is yet to get 2010 hajj report, by Sultan

From **Saxone Akhaine**, Kaduna

**SULTAN** of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, has attributed the delay in submitting the report of the 2010 hajj to the Federal Government to the need to make comprehensive appraisal of the exercise.

Abubakar, who is the President

of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), is also the permanent Amir Hajj appointed by the government.

Opening a two-day post-mortem conference on Hajj 2010 at headquarters of Jama'atul Nasrul Islam (JNI) in Kaduna, the Sultan said his preference for a comprehen-

sive and all-inclusive report to the government was to ensure that future Hajj operations were hitch-free.

He said the conference was interactive and expected to get contributions of all the officials who were part of the event.

Abubakar also explained that a similar meeting was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, immedi-

ately after the *Arafat* and observations from the officials were recorded and would make part of the recommendations by the National Hajj Commission to the government.

He, therefore, urged the participants to make adequate input so that the outcome of the meeting would be acceptable and useful in organising future hajj.